

REMARKS

Request for Reconsideration

Applicants have carefully considered the matters raised by the Examiner in the outstanding Office Action, but remain of the position that patentable subject matter is present. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the Examiner's position based on the amendments to the claims and the following remarks.

Claim Status

Claims 1-4 and 7-27 are pending. Claims 5-6 and 28-31 have been canceled herein.

Claim Rejection – 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 5, 6 and 29-31 had been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Takizawa, *et al.* (U.S. Patent 6,948,856) in view of Tward (U.S. Patent 4,433,580). Claim 28 and 31 had been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Takizawa and Tward, as applied to claims 5, 6 and 29-31 and further in view of McDearmon (U.S. Patent Application 2002/0092360).

Claims 5, 6 and 29-31 have been canceled herein. Thus, the issues raised by the Examiner under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) are moot.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants acknowledge and greatly appreciate the Examiner's indication of allowance of claims 1-4 and claims 7-27.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the Application is in condition for allowance and such action is respectfully requested. Should any fees or extensions of time be necessary in order to maintain this Application in pending condition, appropriate requests are hereby made and authorization is given to debit Account Number 02-2275.

Respectfully submitted,
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